ARE ALL POLITICS MASCULINE? GENDER SOCIALIZED PERSONALITY TRAITS AND DIVERSITY IN POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

INTRODUCTION

With the understanding that political participation encompasses a wide variety of activities, current research shows that women and men tend to differ in the amount, type, and intensity of their participation (Kittilson 2016). In particular, men are more engaged in a variety of electoral, conflictual, and time-intensive modes of participation, while women are as likely or more likely to engage in less institutionalized and less resource intensive forms (see e.g., Coffé and Bolzendahl 2010; 2017; Bourque and Grossholtz 1998; Burns, et al. 2001; Kittilson and Schwindt-Bayer 2012; Stolle et al. 2005). Over time however, gender gaps in voting have often become non-existent, or even reversed (Kittilson 2016; Kostelka et al. 2019). Why and how is gender related to political participation and why are the effects so uneven?

The answers to this question are difficult given the complex, multi-level, intersectional social construction of gender itself (see e.g., Brown 2014; Ridgeway 2011; Smooth 2011). Among the explanations for gender differences in political participation, one prominent approach suggests that it emerges from the socially constructed expectations of gender that respondents internalize and interact with on a daily basis (Hentschel et al. 2019; Ridgeway 2011; Wängnerud et al. 2019; McDermott 2016). Specifically, women are socialized toward stereotypical communal femininity: being passive, private, rule-abiding, and compassionate, while men are socialized and rewarded for meeting the agentic expectations of stereotypical masculinity: leadership, public roles, autonomy, and self-reliance (Eagly et al. 2000; Fox and Lawless 2004; West and Zimmerman 1987; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). Such gender-specific pressures may lower women's levels of political

interest and political engagement compared to men, on average, and may lead women and men to prefer different types of political activities (Coffé and Bolzendahl 2010; Atkeson and Rapoport 2003; Rapoport 1981; Fridkin and Kenney 2007). One U.S. study indicates that agentic-masculine traits strongly drive higher participation (McDermott 2016), pushing us to include gender-socialized personality traits when studying political engagement. Yet, most quantitative assessments of the relationship between gender and political participation in survey research have used binary, woman/man approaches that conflate different aspects including physiology, identity, social structure, and social norms (Lindqvist et al. 2020). However, a small but rapidly growing body of literature, uses more nuanced and comprehensive measures of gender in quantitative research (for an overview see Lindqvist, et al. 2020).

In this paper, we contribute to this burgeoning research by using multifaceted measures of both political participation and self-assessed gender socialized personality traits to better understand how "gender" explains differences across various types of political involvement. Using 2012/2013 data from the Dutch Longitudinal Internet Studies for the Social Sciences (LISS) panel survey, we ask: *To what extent and how do stereotypical gender socialized personality traits relate to various types of political engagement*? Below we begin by establishing key conceptual issues centred on the measure of gender, before turning to a review of current findings regarding more nuanced measures of gender and gender identity and political behaviour.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY "GENDER"?

For over 30 years, gender scholars have highlighted that our discussions of "gender" are typically conflating a variety of traits, social norms, and concepts (West and Zimmerman 1987). In psychology Bem (1974) was one of the earliest to develop a non-dichotomous

measure of gender, and psychologists Hyde et al. (2019) argue that the only valid way to measure such concepts is by embracing multidimensionality whereby "gender/sex" is understood to be "dynamic and responsive, to both internal forces (biological, cognitive) and external forces (social interactions, culture)" (p. 16). In survey research, respondents are commonly given a limited set of categories (usually two categories: man/male and woman/female) to choose from and it is unclear whether a respondent's choice reflects biological or social conceptions of self (Linqvist et al. 2020). To improve this, some allow for more categories. For example, the U.S. General Social Survey uses a "two-step" approach asking first, sex assigned at birth, and second, current gender identity. However, Westbrook and Saperstein (2015) call for measures that vary on a continuum and that encompass the importance of both stereotypical masculine and feminine aspects of gender in any given individual.

One increasingly popular approach allows respondents to assess themselves on continuous scales of masculinity and femininity (Hatemi et al. 2012; Magliozzi et al. 2016; Wängnerud et al. 2019; Bittner and Goodyear-Grant 2017). Another approach borrows from the psychological literature, specifically, the Bem's (1974) Sex Role Inventory (BSRI) (Holt and Ellis 1998; Auster and Ohm 2000). In general, these scales ask respondents to evaluate their personalities on agentic and communal traits (Hentschel et al. 2019; see also Abele and Wojciszke 2014). As a gendered stereotype, the *agentic* traits broadly conform to expectations of (hegemonic) masculinity and include traits such as assertiveness, resoluteness, independence, and leadership, while *communal* traits are associated with (emphasized) femininity and include traits such as sympathy, warmth, and sensitivity (see also Connell and Messerschmidt 2005).

The BSRI approach allows these traits to vary independently and as graduating concepts. Individuals can thus possess both communal/feminine traits and agentic/masculine

traits simultaneously. Such a scale-based approach gives respondents an opportunity to directly incorporate their perceived alignment of themselves with these social stereotypes based on their identities and experiences (see also Magliozzi, et al. 2016; McDermott 2016; Wängnerud et al. 2019; Bittner and Goodyear-Grant 2017; Gidengil and Stolle 2020). It is inaccurate to refer to these exclusively as feminine or masculine traits; an approach which tends to reify binary associations of these trait with women and men. Instead, we refer to the traits as agentic/masculine and communal/feminine (see also e.g., Hentschel et al. 2019; Abele and Wojciszke 2014).

GENDER, GENDER SOCIALIZED PERSONALITY TRAITS AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Citizens engage in democratic politics in a wide variety of ways (Dalton 2008; Norris and Curtis 2006; Pattie et al. 2003). In a review of the findings in Western industrialized democracies regarding the gap between women's and men's political participation, Kittleson (2016) finds the evidence is uneven across different types of political activities. The smallest gaps are found for voter turnout (see also Kostelka et al. 2019), with women even more likely than men to report to have voted in various countries across the globe, including the Netherlands (Van Egmond et al. 1998). However, men remain more likely than women to engage in a variety of activities including contacting politicians, joining political parties, or attending political meetings (Coffé and Bolzendahl 2010; Kittilson and Schwindt-Bayer 2012).

Much research focuses on "institutional" or electoral activities, however, the available repertoire of political activities extends, for example, to boy- or buycotting products, tweeting news stories, and changing one's Facebook profile picture to support a campaign (Quintelier and van Deth 2014; Hooghe et al. 2014.). Scholars highlight the importance of including citizen-initiated and policy-oriented "activist" forms of political activity when studying

political participation (Dalton 2008; Fox 2014; Norris 2002). In terms of less institutionalized activities, women are as likely (if not more so) than men to sign petitions, help raise money for a political or social group, or engage in political consumerism (Stolle et al. 2005). U.S. research indicates no categorical gender/sex difference in attending a demonstration or protest (Burns et al. 2001), but in a cross-national study, women are less likely than men to participate (Coffé and Bolzendahl 2010).

These findings suggest women do not participate less than men, but differently (Coffé and Bolzendahl 2010; Harrison and Munn 2007; Bourque and Grossholtz 1998). This may be partially due to differences in resources, suggesting the importance of categorical approaches of measuring gender (Ridgeway 2011). Due to discrimination and women's lower levels of socio-economic resources and specialization in unpaid caring activities, they are less able than men on average to engage in time-intensive, expensive, or highly skilled forms of activity, such as campaigning for a candidate (Burns 2007; Lister 2003). Instead, women may find it easier to participate in ways that can be incorporated in daily life and do not put more strain on already (relatively) limited resources (Stolle et al. 2005).

However, the broader social-stereotypical conceptualizations regarding the meaning of gender categories also relate to political engagement (see e.g., Wängnerud et al. 2019).[1] In terms of levels of participation, agentic traits, like assertiveness, aggressiveness, dominance, and willingness to take stances, are traits associated with masculinity and men's socialization (Schrock and Schwalbe 2009) and greater political engagement. Indeed, because conflict is inevitable to any political process and discussion, those wishing to avoid

[1] Consistent with the concept of a social identity (Tajfel 1981), research has also shown that the *salience* or *strength* of gender identity might condition the relationships between gender identity and political attitudes and behaviour (see also Cawvey et al. 2017). For example, Bittner and Goodyear-Grant (2017) find that the gender gap in political attitudes across a range of topics is non-existent for women who do not have salient gender identities.

interpersonal conflict may avoid political engagement (Coffé and Bolzendahl 2017; Ulbig and Funk, 1999; Matthes, 2013; Testa et al, 2014).

McDermott (2016) argues that because of the conflictual and competitive character of politics, strongly agentic-masculine personalities are more likely to be politically engaged. Men are typically socialized into the agentic expectations of masculinity and this may increase the likelihood of greater (and more visible and conflictual) participation (see also Hooghe and Stolle 2004). By contrast, communal traits may negatively influence political participation. Traits such as being warm, compassionate and gentle, are traits stereotypical of femininity and women's socialization and at odds with mainstream views of the ruthless political field. Women's socialization into feminized identities increases the pressure to specialize in the "private" sphere (Lister 2003; Lovenduski 1998) and may lead women to be more likely to engage in more private, less conflictual types of participation. In the U.S., McDermott (2016) used the BSRI and found agentic/masculinity traits to be positively related to political engagement, while communal/femininity traits had no significant effect.

RESEARCH EXPECTATIONS

Categorical Gender/Sex Identity

In line with previous findings, we expect that women are not consistently less likely than men to participate overall. Instead, we expect gender/sex to matter differently across types of political engagement:

H1: Women will be more likely than men to vote and engage in the least conflictual and resource-intensive types of participation.

H2: Men will be more likely than women to engage in conflictual and resource-intensive types of participation.

Socialized Gender Personality Traits and Levels of Participation

Regardless of identifying as a woman/man, self-assessed Agentic/Masculine Traits (AMT) and Communal/Feminine Traits (CFT) should matter, and in line with the literature above, our hypotheses thus read:

H3: Self-assessments of holding more agentic/masculine traits will be positively related to political participation.

H4: Self-assessments of holding more communal/feminine traits will be negatively related to political participation.

Socialized Gender Personality Traits and Types of Participation

Similar to gender/sex, we anticipate socialized gender personality traits to matter differently between different types of political participation. In this case, we expect that self-assessments of holding more AMT will be most strongly positively related to the more conflictual types of political participation, while self-assessments of holding more CFT will be most strongly negatively related to the more conflictual types of political participation. In addition, these scores may be significantly positively related to the least conflictual types of participation. Yet, prior research did not find such a relationship (McDermott 2016). Therefore, our hypotheses focus on the effect of traits on the more conflictual types of engagement and read:

H5: Self-assessments of holding more agentic/masculine traits will be most strongly positively related to the more conflictual types of political participation.

H6: Self-assessments of holding more communal/feminine traits will be most strongly negatively related to the more conflictual types of political participation.

DATA

To answer our research question, we draw on data from the Dutch LISS Household Panel is administered by CentERdata (Institute for Data Collection and Research, Tilburg University, the Netherlands) and based on a true probability sample of Dutch households. It consists of 4,500 households, comprising 7,000 individuals.

Given that we rely on Dutch data and to better contextualize our analyses and findings, it is important to acknowledge that the culture of the Netherlands is known for being tolerant toward social differences and not enforcing strict/moralistic gender or sexual boundaries. The country developed the *The Equal Treatment Act 1994* banning discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation in employment, housing, public accommodations, and other areas. It was extended in 2019 to include gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics. Dutch have among the highest support in Europe for same-sex rights (Eurobarometer 2019), and gender egalitarianism (Merens and van den Brakel 2014). Yet, many Dutch women work only part-time and are economically and financially dependent on men partners (Portegijs and van den Brakel 2018).

For the current study, we rely on the 'Gender, Party Characteristics and Radical Right Voting' survey which measures respondents' feminine and masculine personality traits and was organized in October 2012. This survey was linked to the Core 'Politics and Values' survey (Wave 6) which was organized in December 2012–January 2013 and the World Values Survey for which data were collected in December 2012. We also took some variables measuring socio-economic characteristics from the core 'Work and Schooling' survey (2012 wave, collected April-May 2012) and the core 'Religion and Ethnicity, (2013 wave, collected

January-February 2013).[2] Listwise deletion of observations with missing data on the independent variables was used. The final sample size is 4,616.[3]

MEASURES

Dependent Variables: Measuring Political Participation

Following the research reviewed above, and reflecting theoretical and substantive differences, we distinguish five types of participation: voting, party membership, organizational activism, collective activism, and private activism. The types of engagement thus include institutional (voting and party membership) and activist forms of engagement (organizational activism, collective activism and private activism). They can also be distinguished based on the confrontational character of the activity and their likelihood to prime feelings of conflict. In particular, public expressions of beliefs and participation in protest provide more opportunity for interpersonal conflict than activities limited to private expressions such as private activism (boycotting products or signing a petition) or voting (Milbrath 1965; Ulbig and Funk 1999). Although voting includes an ideological choice, it is mainly a private act which does not require public statements or partisan confessions, thus is less likely to include political conflict (Coffé and Bolzendahl 2017; Ulbig and Funk 1999; Kittleson 2016).

[2] We chose for each survey the wave organized closest to the two main waves we relied on, the 'Gender, Party Characteristics and Radical Right Voting' survey and the 'Politics and Values' survey (Wave 6).

[3] Given that observations were only deleted for missing values on the independent variables, the sample size differs for the different dependent variables. It is also significantly lower for the analyses investigating private activism which use the World Values Survey (WVS) wave. This wave was conducted among a significant lower number of respondents than the LISS core surveys (1,884 completed responses in the WVS compared with more than 5,000 completed responses in the LISS core surveys).

Our measure of *voting* asks respondents whether they voted in the parliamentary elections held on 12 September 2012. The variable distinguishes those who voted (1) from those who did not (0). Respondents who said that they did not know whether they had voted or who were not eligible to vote were excluded. The variable *party membership* measures whether respondents are member of a political party (1) or not (0).

Organizational activism combines three different items asking respondents if they have done any of those ways to raise a political issue or to influence politicians or government during the past five years by: (1) making use of a political party or organization, (2) participating in a government-organized public hearing, discussion or citizens' participation meeting, (3) contacting a politician or civil servant. Answers regarding whether they (1) have done it during the past five years or (0) have not done it during the past five years were grouped into an additive scale (Cronbach's Alpha: .57).[4]

Collective activism relies on two items: whether respondents have (1) participated in an action group, (2) participated in a protest action, protest march or demonstration during the past five years (Correlation: .28).[5]

Finally, *private activism* combines two items: signing a petition and joining a boycott (Correlation: .43). For each item the answer categories were originally "would never do",

[4] The decision to combine the three items in a single scale is not only based on substantive reasons (all refer to similar ways of engaging in politics) but also supported by a principal component factor analysis (Table A in the appendix) and a test of the internal consistency (measured by Cronbach's Alpha). As can be seen from Table A, two items included in the survey loaded poorly on both factors and are therefore not included in our study.

[5] While the correlation between both items is relatively low, the decision to combine both items in one scale is in line with the principal component factor analysis presented in Table A in the appendix. The explanatory patterns of sex/gender and gender socialized traits are also similar for both items.

"might do", and "have done". These have been recoded to distinguish those who have done it (1) from those who have not done it (0).

Table 1 presents descriptive information, broken down by gender/sex, for all dependent variables.

[Insert Table 1 About Here]

Women are less likely than men to participate in most political activities. There are no gender/sex differences in reported voting or private activism. Overall women and men report very high levels of voting[6], followed by signing petitions, but are unlikely to engage in any of the remaining activities. The gender/sex gap is largest for organizational activism with men being three times as likely to engage than women.

Explanatory Variables: Categorical Gender and Continuous Gender Socialized Personality Traits

Categorical gender/sex identity is measured as provided by the survey instrument, which asked respondents to identify as a woman/female (1) or a man/male (0).[7]

Continuous measures of gender socialized traits are assessed through a shortened form of the Bem's Sex Role Inventory (BSRI; Bem, 1981). Respondents were asked to assess how often a given personality trait applies to their character, with the possible answers ranging from 1 'never or almost never true' to 7 'always or almost always true.' Respondents rated themselves on 20 different traits with 10 of these traits used to reflect qualities seen as stereotypical communal/feminine traits and 10 as stereotypical agentic/masculine traits in

[6] As is common, overreporting of voter turnout is occurring, with actual reported turnout being 74.6% compared with 87.7% in the survey. As official statistics on turnout broken down by gender do not exist in the Netherlands, it is unclear whether this overreporting is gendered. While research on the US suggests no gender difference in over-reporting (e.g., Silver, Anderson and Abramson 1986; Cassel 2003), a Danish study does find a gender bias, with women being more likely to overreport compared with men (Dahlgaard et al. 2019).

[7] The LISS datafile only includes these two categories.

contemporary Western societies. The questions were randomly posed throughout the questionnaire. The communal/feminine traits include being: understanding, sympathetic, warm, loves children, compassionate, gentle, eager to soothe hurt feelings, affectionate, sensitive to needs of others, and tender (Cronbach's $\alpha = .89$). Masculine traits include being: willing to take risks, forceful, strong personality, assertive, independent, leadership ability, aggressive, dominant, willing to take a stand, and willing to defend own beliefs (Cronbach's $\alpha = .82$).

While the items are reliable measures and internally consistent, they can be viewed as instrumental and expressive traits, and automatically assigning these labels of "masculinity" and "femininity" could be construed as reifying gendered dichotomies. Although we follow previous research (Bem 1981; McDermott 2016) operationalizing two different scales, we find it more accurate to refer to the scales as "*Agentic Masculine Traits" (AMT)* and "*Communal/Feminine Traits" (CFT)*.[8]

Control Variables

Our multivariate analyses also control for various socio-economic characteristics and political attitudes known to relate to political engagement and gender differences therein (see e.g., Coffé and Bolzendahl 2010; Kostelka et al. 2019; Schlozman, Burns and Verba 1999; Verba, Burns and Schlozman 1997): level of education, occupation, employment status, age, marital status, attendance of religious services, political interest, and internal and external political efficacy. For example, men are more likely to be full-time employed than women, and employment is positively related to political engagement. Therefore, and as shown by Schlozman et al. (1999), gender differences in workplace experiences explain part of the

[8] The operationalization of the two scales is also in line with a factor analysis including the 20 traits (see Table B in the appendix). The choice to label these as agentic and communal aligns with current research in social psychology (see e.g., Hentschel, et al. 2019; Abele and Wojciszke 2014).

gender gap in political participation. Similarly, political attitudes such as political interest and efficacy are known to be important explanations for political engagement. As women are known to be less politically interested, informed, and efficacious than men, these attitudes and the gender differences therein help explaining the gender differences in political engagement (Verba et al. 1997; see also e.g. Atkeson and Rapoport 2003; Coffé and Bolzendahl 2010). The inclusion of the control variables thus implicitly pulls from a theoretical argument about political participation gender gaps being due *not* to essential differences between men and women, but about the social construction of gender and its co-constitution with other socio-economic characteristics and attitudes. While our cross-sectional data do not allow strict causal tests, we do follow this theoretical model of expecting binary gaps to be driven by other social characteristics.

Table 2 presents descriptive information, broken down by gender/sex, for all explanatory and control variables. It shows that women score significantly higher on the CFT scale than men (mean women: 5.44; mean men: 5.05). Men, in their turn, score appreciably higher on AMT scale than women (mean women: 4.35; mean men: 4.61). Although the gender/sex differences are not large, they are statistically significant ($p<.001$). It is also notable that *among* men and *among* women, respondents are significantly ($p<.001$) more likely to view themselves as having CFT traits as compared to AMT traits. The key socio-economic and attitudinal controls also reflect common patterns. Women have, on average, lower socioeconomic resources (education, employment), and have significantly lower levels of political interest and efficacy.

[Insert Table 2 About Here]

Table C in the appendix introduces the questions and the operationalization of the control variables. Table D in the appendix shows the correlations between all dependent and independent variables included in our analyses.

METHODS

We model the relationship between gender/sex and CFT/AMT scores and each type of participation in three steps. First, Figure 1 presents baseline differences in predicted probabilities of participation from ordered and binary logit models only including gender/sex, CFT and AMT as independent variables. Second, in Tables 3 and 4 we add controls for socio-economic status variables and political attitudes. Dichotomous measures of voting and party membership are analysed with binary logistic regression. The other three variables measuring political participation (organizational, collective and private activism), are ordinal variables analysed using ordered logistic regression models (Long and Freese 2014).[9] Third, significant relationships between gender/sex, CFT and AMT and political engagement are illustrated with marginal predicted probabilities in Figures 2 and 3.

RESULTS

Baseline Descriptive Patterns

Before moving to our multivariate analyses, we explore the relative relationships between gender/sex, CFT/AMT scores, and political participation measures through baseline binary and ordered logit regressions, and the marginal predicted probabilities from these models are presented in Figure 1.

[Insert Figure 1 About Here]

The top panel in Figure 1 reveals that women are less likely than men to be party members or engage in organizational or collective activism. This shows that even when

[9] OLS models are problematic in assuming that the outcomes are interval, and similar concerns preclude using a Poisson distribution. Our data violates the assumption of Poisson distributions that activities occur independently, with engaging in one neither diminishing nor increasing the chance of engaging in another.

controlling for CFT/AMT scores, the bivariate relationships between gender and participation from Table 1 hold; illustrating that gender/sex and gender socialized personality traits are not the same. There are no significantly gender/sex differences in voting and private activism.

Controlling for gender/sex, higher AMT scores are significantly related to organizational, collective, and private activism. Differences are particularly large for organizational and private activism, and much larger than the gender/sex gaps indicating that agentic personality traits matter more for these types of political engagement than gender/sex identity per se. Conversely, higher CFT scores are significantly negatively linked to organizational and private activism. Given that the gender/sex private activism gap was not significant but the CFT gap is large, higher CFT scores appear to have strong effects regardless of gender/sex identity.

Multivariate Analyses

As established by prior research on gender/sex and political engagement, much of any gender/sex gap emerges from socio-economic and attitudinal cleavages. These gender/sex gaps in socio-economic background and political attitudes were evident in Table 2. Table 3 now assesses relationship between gender/sex and gender socialized personality traits, and our two institutional participation measures (voting and party membership) when controlling for various socio-economic characteristics and political attitudes. Table 3 confirms that gender/sex and gender socialized traits are not significantly (at $p<.05$-level) related to voting likelihood. Turning to party membership, a model controlling for socio-economic resources indicates that women are still less likely to be members than men, but the significant gender/sex gap disappears when controlling for political interest and efficacy. In this case, it is only because of women's lower political interest and external/internal political efficacy that they join parties less than men. These political attitudes all have a significant and positive impact on the likelihood of voting and becoming a party member. We also ran an

analysis including interactions between gender/sex and the political attitudes. None of these interactions were significant, suggesting that the effect of political attitudes on the likelihood of being a party member is similar for women and men.

[Insert Table 3 About Here]

In Table 4 we consider the relationship between gender/sex and gender socialized personality traits and organizational, collective, and private activism when controlling for socio-economic characteristics and political attitudes. In models only controlling for socio-economic resources, evidence suggests that women are less active in organizational and collective activities, and that there is no gender/sex gap in private activism; confirming previous cross-national research (e.g., Coffé and Bolzendahl 2010). Models also including political attitudes (interest and efficacy), indicate that only for organizational activism do women continue to engage less than men.[10] Controlling for women's average lower political interest and efficacy, there are no significant differences between women and men in engaging in collective activism, and women are *more* likely than men to engage in private activism. Political attitudes can thus explain the significant gender difference in collective activism. Additional analyses including interactions between gender and political interest and internal and external political efficacy were not significant, suggesting that the effect of political attitudes on collective activism is similar for women and men.

The relationship between levels of AMT and CFT traits and the various measures of activism also changes when controlling for resources and political attitudes. AMT retains its positive relationship to organizational activism found in Figure 1, regardless of controls. Yet,

[10] For the individual item measuring participation in a government-organized public hearing, discussion or citizens' participation meeting, gender/sex is no longer significant once controlling for the attitudinal characteristics. By contrast, holding CFT traits has a marginally significant (p=.05) negative effect on participation in a government-organized public hearing.

the positive link between AMT traits and collective and private activism illustrated in Figure 1 disappears when controlling for socio-economic resources. Similarly, the negative relationship between CFT traits and organizational and private activism from Figure 1 is no longer significant in Table 4. In general, this evidence suggests that beyond categorical gender/sex and controls for socio-economic resources and attitudinal differences, there is little independent relationship between AMT and CFT traits and activism.

[Insert Table 4 About Here]

We also empirically explored interactions among these variables. There were no significant (at $p<.05$-level) gender/sex interactions between or within AMT and CFT measures, with one exception. When interacting CFT and AMT scales, we found a negative and significant ($p<.05$) relationship with voting. Although neither AMT or CFT traits are significantly related to voting, this interaction suggests that being gender polarized (higher CFT/lower AMT; lower CFT/higher AMT) increases the probability of voting.

Given that all of the results are from logit-based regression models, the coefficients are not directly interpretable (Long and Freese 2014). To better enable the substantive interpretation of these effects Figure 2 shows marginal predicted probabilities for the significant effects (as shown in the full models in Tables 3 and 4) of gender/sex (Figure 2) and AMT (Figure 3). The predicted probabilities are based on the full models with all other variables held at their means.

In Figure 2, we first see that the probability of engaging in *any* organizational activism is quite low, regardless of gender/sex. However, even when controlling for all socio-economic and attitudinal factors, men are about one and a half percent more likely to have done at least one activity in this area. It is very unlikely respondents engage in two or three of these activities, but men are always more engaged than women. In comparison, the probability of engaging in at least one mode of private activism is quite high, and women are

six percent more likely to have done one of these activities. Women are also more likely to have done two such activities by about two percent.

[Insert Figure 2 About Here]

Figure 3 illustrates how agentic/masculine traits relate to organizational activism. At all levels of activism, higher self-assessed AMT are related to greater activism. Those with high AMT scores are about ten times as likely to have done at least one activity compared with those with low AMT scores.

[Insert Figure 3 About Here]

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Based on a representative sample of Dutch adults from 2012/13 and a review of research in the field, our investigation of how stereotypical gender socialized personality traits relate to various types of political engagement led us to evaluate six hypotheses. We find mostly support for our first two hypotheses. As specified in H1, women are more likely than men to engage in private forms of activism (e.g., signing petitions) that involve lower commitments and potential for conflict. While we had anticipated women to be more likely to vote than men, this is not the case. There is no significant gender/sex difference in the likelihood of voting. In contrast and as expected in H2, men are more likely to be party members and engage in collective activism (when not controlling for gender political attitude differences), and are more likely to engage in organizational activism, regardless of controls. In general, these finding show that men are more likely than women to engage in the most resource-intensive (e.g., time, dues), and conflictual types of participation (e.g., protest, public debate). An important portion of this, however, is clearly accounted for by gender/sex differences in political interest and efficacy.

Investigating the possibility that socialization into gendered personality traits may account for overall differences in participation, initial baseline models controlling only for gender/sex suggested that AMT are positively related to participation (H3) or that CFT are negatively related to participation (H4), at least for activist types of engagement. However, controls for SES characteristics and political attitudes left only one positive significant relationship between AMT and organizational activism. Thus, to the extent that gendered personality traits are linked to participation, it is mostly in favour of H5, that AMT traits relate most strongly to organizational activism, which suggests an *agentic* effort to make one's voice heard in political settings. Perhaps surprisingly, higher AMT scores were not positively related to collective activism, which is arguably a very conflictual mode of participation, and there is no evidence for H6, that higher CFT scores will be negatively related to the most conflict-prone forms of participation.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Does "gender" explain political involvement? Our findings suggest: "it depends." In particular, it depends both on how we measure political activities and gender. First, we join a growing body of literature confirming that women and men participate differently when it comes to a variety of activist activities, but quite similarly for institutionalized activities (e.g., voting) (e.g., Coffé and Bolzendahl 2010; 2017; Bourque and Grossholtz 1998; Burns, et al. 2001; Kittilson and Schwindt-Bayer 2012; Stolle et al. 2005; Kittilson 2016; Kostelka et al. 2019). Second, we highlight that two categories are only a crude approximation for the wide variation that exists when it comes to gender as an identity or broader social construction (Westbrook and Saperstein 2015; Lindqvist et al. 2020; Gidengil and Stolle 2020).

Addressing the need to improve the nuance and sophistication of gender in public opinion research, we employed measures based on the BSRI approach (Bem 1974, 1981).

While the BSRI is not without criticism, it does tap into key traits disproportionately valued in stereotypes of women's and men's social roles, and gender/sex cleavages are prominent in these scores between women and men (Lindqvist et al. 2020; McDermott 2016). Our findings, suggest they are less consistently related to participation than standard categorical approaches, echoing a review by Cawvey et al. (2017) showing that personality traits are unevenly related to participation.

Of the gender socialized personality traits considered, agentic/masculine traits matter most, with those who perceive themselves as scoring high in agentic (masculine) traits being more likely to also engage in very agentic forms of activity: engaging with political parties or organizations, going to public hearings, or contacting politicians. Although these findings are in the same vein as McDermott's (2016) findings in the U.S., "masculinity" appears less powerful in the Netherlands. This may relate to different cultures in both countries, with the culture of the Netherlands being known for not enforcing strict/moralistic gender or sexual boundaries and being tolerant toward social differences (Eurobarometer 2019). While statistically significant gender/sex differences occurred in holding communal/feminine and agentic/masculine traits in the expected direction, they were relatively small and smaller than in McDermott's (2016) U.S. based study. Perhaps not surprisingly then, McDermott (2016) found that agentic/masculine traits significantly predicted higher engagement net of many controls.

We conclude that categorical gender/sex measures remain important factors in understanding democratic political participation. Although gender socialized personality trait measures do not emerge as strongly improving our understanding of gender differences in political participation in this study, they – and in particular agentic/masculine traits – do matter for some types of political activism. In addition, the research is clear, that we can and should do better when it comes to measuring gender (Westbrook and Saperstein 2015).

Therefore, we suggest further research more extensively examines alternative measures that separate out bodily attributes, self-defined gender identity, and gender expression (Lindqvist 2020). Some current research is gaining traction through using a gendered sense of self measure that asks respondents to evaluate how feminine and masculine they feel, for example, and showing that it is hypermasculine men and hyperfeminine women that vary most strongly in their political attitudes (Magliozzi et al. 2016; Gidengil and Stolle 2020). However, our results also highlight the need to better understand (and undermine) inequalities in political interest and efficacy, including an improved understanding of causal links between political interest, gender/sex, socialized gender roles, and political participation (see e.g. Dassonneville and Kostelka 2020). As a system that women find on average less relevant or open to them, this is bad news for democracy, and solutions should be developed to encourage women's voice in politics and opportunities to make that voice effective.

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Table 1. Mean/Proportion (Standard Deviations in Parentheses) for All Types of Political Participation Broken Down by Gender/Sex

Political Engagement Items	Range	Women	Men	Sig. Test[a]	N
Voting	0/1	87.32%	88.15%		4,434
Party Membership	0/1	3.94%	5.67%	**	4,612
Organizational Activism	0-1	.02 (.11)	.06 (.17)	***	4,613
Making use of a political party or organization	0/1	1.50%	3.86%	***	
Participation in a government-organized public hearing, discussion or citizens' participation meeting	0/1	2.80%	5.81%	***	
Contacting a politician or civil servant	0/1	3.05%	7.80%	***	
Collective Activism	0-1	.02 (.11)	.03 (.14)	***	4,613
Participated in an action group	0/1	1.63%	3.11%	**	
Participated in a protest action, protest march or demonstration	0/1	2.24%	3.25%	*	
Private Activism	0-1	.21 (.30)	.22 (.32)		1,564
Signing a petition	35.73%	0/1	34.93%		
Joining a boycott	6.35%	0/1	8.49%		

Data Source: LISS, 2012 and 2013
Notes: [a] Based on bivariate logistic and ordered logit regressions.
***p<.001; **p<.01; *p<.05 (two-tailed)

Table 2. Mean/Proportion (Standard Deviations in Parentheses) for All Explanatory and Control Variables Broken Down by Gender/Sex (N=4,616: 2,154 men and 2,462 women)

	Range	Gender/Sex		Sig. Test[c]
		Men	Women	
Gender Socialized Traits				
CFT[a]	1-7	5.05 (.77)	5.44 (.77)	***
AMT[b]	1-7	4.61 (.75)	4.35 (.82)	***
Dependent Variables				
Control Variables				
Level of education (*ref.:* High)				
Low	0/1	31.89%	40.05%	***
Middle	0/1	34.17%	33.06%	
Occupation (*ref.:* Non-manual work)				
Manual work	0/1	29.16%	16.90%	***
No occupation	0/1	5.57%	9.06%	***
Currently employed	0/1	51.39%	44.52%	***
Age (years)	16-92	53.61 (17.02)	51.19 (17.18)	***
Married or Widowed	0/1	67.46%	64.83%	
Church Attendance (*ref.:* Never)				
Monthly	0/1	14.62%	16.73%	
Rarely	0/1	23.35%	28.19%	***
Political Interest	1-3	2.08 (.61)	1.82 (.56)	***
External Political Efficacy	0-1	.32 (.39)	.29 (.38)	*
Internal Political Efficacy	0-1	.50 (.34)	.34 (.33)	***

***p<.001; **p<.01; *p<.05 (two-tailed) *Data Source:* LISS, 2012 and 2013

Notes: [a] Communal/feminine traits; [b] Agentic/masculine traits; [c] Based on bivariate logistic and OLS regressions.

Table 3. Logistic Regression Coefficients for Gender and CFT/AMT Scales (Controlling for Socio-Economic Characteristics and Political Attitudes) for Voting and Party Membership (Standard Errors in Parentheses)

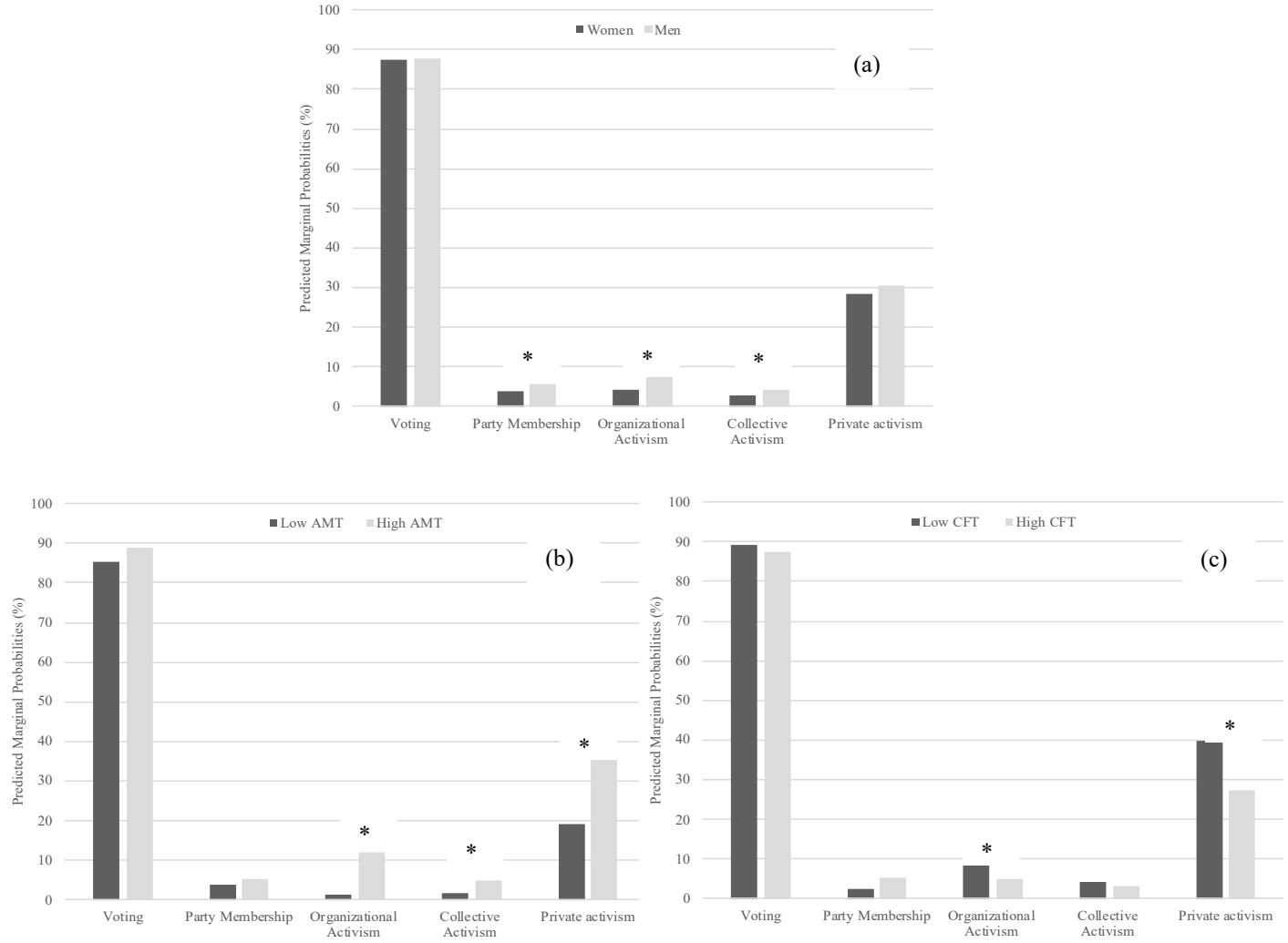
	Voting				Party Membership			
	Socio-Economic Model		Attitudinal Model		Socio-Economic Model		Attitudinal Model	
Gender/Sex (ref: Men)								
Women	-.06	(.10)	.20	(.11)	-.40*	(.16)	-.09	(.16)
Gender Socialized Traits								
CFT[a]	-.03	(.06)	-.02	(.07)	.13	(.10)	.21	(.11)
AMT[b]	.05	(.06)	-.07	(.07)	.17	(.10)	-.06	(.11)
Level of education (ref.: High)								
Low	-1.11***	(.15)	-.64***	(.15)	-.51**	(.19)	.15	(.21)
Middle	-.76***	(.14)	-.45**	(.14)	-.26	(.18)	.19	(.19)
Occupation (ref.: Non-manual work)								
Manual work	-.31**	(.11)	-.12	(.12)	-.48*	(.23)	-.27	(.23)
No occupation	-.16	(.21)	-.06	(.21)	.06	(.29)	.14	(.30)
Currently employed	-.22*	(.11)	-.09	(.11)	-.14	(.18)	-.08	(.18)
Age (years)	.02***	(.00)	.01***	(.00)	.02***	(.01)	.02***	(.01)
Married or Widowed	-.03	(.11)	.06	(.12)	-.02	(.18)	.09	(.19)
Attendance Religious Services (ref.: Never)								
Monthly	.82***	(.17)	.77***	(.17)	1.49***	(.17)	1.60***	(.17)
Rarely	.33**	(.11)	.29*	(.12)	.25	(.19)	.31	(.20)
Political Interest			.93***	(.10)			.90***	(.15)
External Political Efficacy			.85***	(.16)			1.21***	(.18)
Internal Political Efficacy			.35*	(.17)			1.07***	(.26)
Constant	1.81	(.44)	-.11	(.46)	-5.55	(.70)	-8.67	(.81)
N	4,434		4,434		4,612		4,612	
Pseudo R^2	.05		.11		.09		.18	

Data Source: LISS, 2012 and 2013
Notes: [a] Communal/Feminine Traits; [b] Agentic/Masculine Traits.
***p<.001; **p<.01; *p<.05 (two-tailed)

Table 4. Ordered Logit Regression Coefficients for Gender, AMT and CFT Scales, and Controls on Organizational, Collective and Private Activism

	Organizational Activism		Collective Activism		Private Activism	
	SES	Pol. Att,	SES	Pol. Att,	SES	Pol. Att,
Gender/Sex (ref: Men)						
Women	-.59*** (.12)	-.25* (.12)	-.44** (.16)	-.17 (.17)	.10 (.12)	.32* (.12)
Gender Socialized Traits						
CFT[a]	-.15 (.08)	-.10 (.08)	.02 (.10)	.05 (.10)	-.10 (.08)	-.06 (.08)
AMT[b]	.60*** (.08)	.40*** (.09)	.15 (.10)	-.01 (.11)	.09 (.07)	-.01 (.08)
Level of education (ref.: High)						
Low	-1.03*** (.15)	-.52** (.16)	-1.22*** (.22)	-.89*** (.23)	-1.15*** (.15)	-.84*** (.16)
Middle	-.67*** (.13)	-.33* (.14)	-.73*** (.18)	-.52** (.19)	-.71*** (.13)	-.49*** (.14)
Occupation (ref.: Non-manual work)						
Manual work	-.15 (.16)	-.50 (.31)	.17 (.21)	.36 (.22)	-.35* (.16)	-.20 (.16)
No occup.	-.59 (.30)	.12 (.17)	.22 (.32)	.32 (.33)	-.21 (.27)	-.16 (.27)
Employed	-.27* (.13)	-.22 (.13)	-.21 (.17)	-.16 (.17)	.10 (.13)	.18 (.13)
Age (years)	.02*** (.00)	.02*** (.00)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	-.00 (.00)	-.00 (.00)
Marr/Wid	-.07 (.13)	-.01 (.14)	-.50** (.17)	-.49** (.17)	-.18 (.12)	-.17 (.12)
Attendance Religious Services (ref.: Never)						
Monthly	.29 (.15)	.36* (.16)	-.44 (.25)	-.42 (.25)	-.56** (.17)	-.54** (.18)
Rarely	.30* (.12)	.35** (.13)	-.09 (.17)	-.08 (.17)	-.03 (.13)	-.05 (.13)
Political Interest	—	.80*** (.11)	—	.56*** (.14)	—	.40*** (.11)
External Pol. Eff.	—	.63*** (.14)	—	.14 (.19)	—	.42** (.15)
Internal Pol. Eff.	—	1.28*** (.20)	—	1.00*** (.26)	—	.66** (.19)
Cut Points	4.53/5.87/7.23	7.13/8.53/9.92	3.04/4.82	4.53/6.32	-.33/1.88	.92/3.19
N	4,613	4,613	4,613	4,613	1,564	1,564
Pseudo R^2	.08	.14	.04	.07	.06	.08

Notes: [a] Communal/Feminine Traits; [b] Agentic/Masculine Traits. *Data Source:* LISS, 2012 and 2013
***p<.001; **p<.01; *p<.05 (two-tailed); (Standard Errors in Parentheses)



Notes: Measures of organizational, collective, or private activism, marginal predicted probabilities refer to having participated in at least one mode of these types of activism. Low CFT/AMT=2 and high CFT/AMT=6 scores. Probabilities are based on logistic and ordered regression models predicting participation based on gender/sex and CFT and AMT scores and include no other controls. *p<.05

Figure 1. Predicted Marginal Probabilities from Baseline Models for Engaging in Levels of Different Types of Engagement by (a) Gender/Sex, (b) AMT scores, and (c) CFT scores

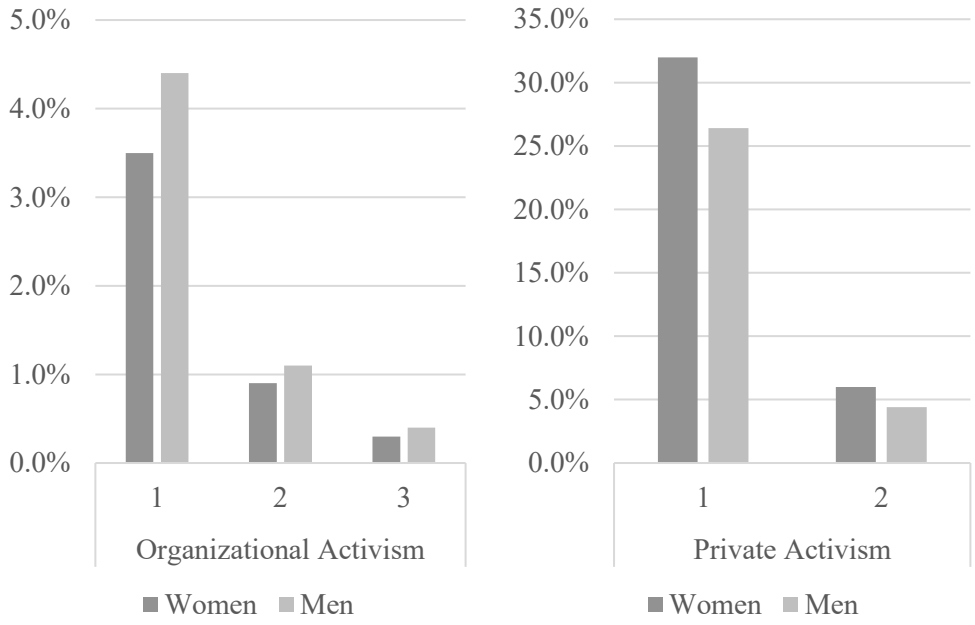


Figure 2. Predicted Marginal Probabilities for Engaging in Levels of Organizational and Private Activism from Full Models with All Controls (Table 4)

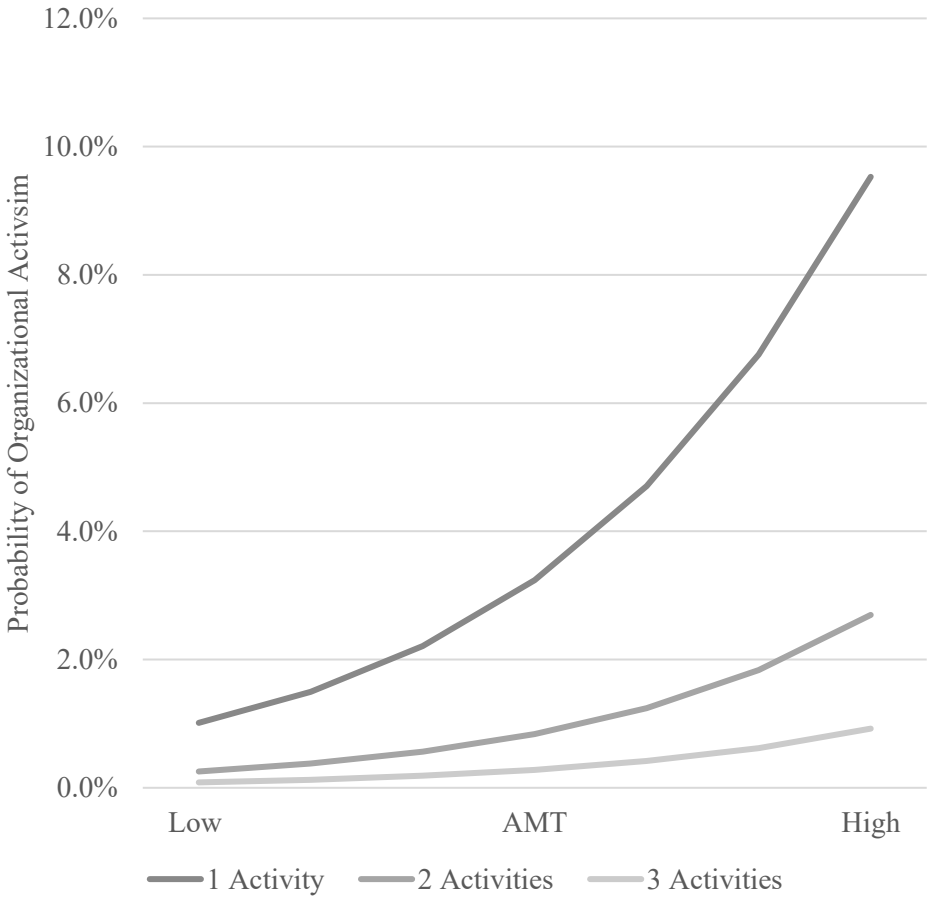


Figure 3. Predicted Marginal Probabilities of Engaging in Organizational Activism at all Levels Based on AMT Score from Full Model with All Controls (Table 4)